



Antiterrorism Emergency Assistance Program Grant (AEAP) Fact Sheet

The Massachusetts Office of Victim Assistance (MOVA) obtained funding from the Antiterrorism Emergency Assistance Program Grant (AEAP) administered by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime (OVC). This funding will provide long-term support services for victims and witnesses of the Boston Marathon bombings and events that followed during the pursuit and apprehension of the suspects. It is important to acknowledge that these funds are not permitted for direct cash assistance, but rather to develop and sustain direct victim services such as legal, social, employment, educational and mental health needs of all victims and witnesses.

VICTIM POPULATION TO BE SERVED

For the purposes of this grant, MOVA is utilizing the following definition of Victim and Witnesses:

"Victim" is being used to connote those persons who were physically injured or killed, their immediate family members, those persons who physically experienced the event or its immediate aftermath, including those in the immediate vicinity of the bombing, those surrounding the scene, those professionals and non-professionals who tended to the wounded, those who were involved in the subsequent apprehension of suspects or any other individual, whom by virtue of their unique experience or prior trauma history, would be triggered or impacted by this event."

AEAP Funds are intended to support services to all victims and witnesses of the tragedy, regardless of the degree and severity of the injury sustained.

CURRENTLY SUPPORTED VICTIM SERVICES

MOVA Direct Services:

Victim Navigators currently have access to a broad network of mental health clinicians, civil legal attorneys, trauma specialists and others across the state to assist victims with their immediate recovery needs. In addition to connecting victims to specialized providers in their areas, Navigators also provide assistance with the following:

- ◆ **Housing Assistance** (e.g.: facilitating public/private housing, HUD vouchers, needed home modifications, etc.)
- ◆ **Financial Assistance** (e.g.: facilitating Crime Victim Compensation, SSDI/SSI, and other government benefits)
- ◆ **Employment** (e.g.: facilitating retraining, Family Medical Leave Act benefits, short/long disability leaves, etc.)
- ◆ **Education** (e.g.: ensuring accessibility, assisting in requesting academic and/or tuition accommodations, etc.)

To contact MOVA Victim Navigators:

Phone: 1-855-970-MOVA (6682)
Email: Stacey.Corin@state.ma.us
Website: <http://www.mass.gov/mova/boston-marathon/>

Emergency, Short-term Community Based Services:

In the immediate aftermath of this terrorist event, MOVA implemented emergency service contracts with external providers to sustain and build existing services to meet the demand of this large and geographically disperse victim population. These contracted services include:

- ◆ Emergency bereavement and/or counseling support;
- ◆ On-site assessments of family/child emotional, social, and support service needs;
- ◆ Trauma-informed bed-side, clinical and/or outreach counseling for adults and children;
- ◆ Staff debriefings with first responders (e.g.: medical providers, volunteers, police, etc.);
- ◆ Delivery of services and coordination with other providers based on specific needs (e.g.: healthcare, housing, home modifications, etc.);
- ◆ Age-appropriate, culturally sensitive support groups (both virtual and in-person) for survivors and family members; and

- ◆ Civil legal services

These contracts are short-term and will terminate in June 2014. These services, as well as other specialized services, will be expanded upon and funded long-term via AEAP funding which will last through April 2016.

VICTIM SERVICES TO BE EXPANDED WITH AEAP FUNDING

Given the unique physical and psychological injuries that result from a terrorist attack, specialized services are needed to serve the long-term and changing needs of this victim population. Many of these service areas require specialized assessments, individualized treatment plans, and long-term supports to help victims recover and cope with their injuries. MOVA will fund appropriate agencies with the necessary expertise to provide these specialized services which will last through April 2016. These services will include:

Interactive Web-Based Resources and Advocacy

Given the broad geographic distribution of victims, AEAP funding will be directed toward creating an interactive client portal that will help guide victims and witnesses through the maze of information and services in order to access what they need and what is available. Further, a “Resiliency Center” will be established to serve as a centralized resource for victims to ensure consistent information and effective referrals.

Behavioral Health Services

Behavioral health responses in the wake of a terrorist act requires specialized services that are unique and can vary from traditional trauma services. A unique and comprehensive approach will be implemented that includes a holistic range of behavioral health interventions including: individual and group counseling, family and marital counseling, Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) and tapping interventions for Post Traumatic Stress (PTS) symptoms, stress management supports, and child witness to violence services.

Loss of Hearing Services

Many individuals in close proximity to the blast sites were subject to extreme acoustic trauma which results in a variety of conditions ranging from hearing loss to tinnitus. These injuries are not always immediately identifiable and manifest and/or worsen over time. As such, AEAP funding will ensure long-term expert assessments, screening, and treatment plans for individuals experiencing any hearing loss or related symptoms.

Traumatic Brain Injury Services

AEAP funding will seek to establish a centralized resource for victims to access expert screening for blast-related head injuries. MOVA is working with relevant and qualified stakeholders to identify the best government and/or non-governmental agencies to conduct these screenings and to help victims and their families develop long-term treatment plans and therapies where they reside.

Civil Legal Assistance

MOVA hopes to sustain existing pro bono and expand paid representation efforts to support victims’ lawful access to federal, state, and local government benefits ranging from unemployment supports to housing assistance. Civil legal assistance will also include legal advocacy relating to privacy interests, employment, education, medical insurance, as well as debt and student loan interventions.

Resiliency Forums

Starting in March 2014, MOVA will host “Resiliency Forums” for victims of the bombings and their families, caretakers, and significant others. These Resiliency Forums will provide victims with the opportunity to learn about the long term impact of grief, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), hearing loss, as well as long term strategies for resiliency and recovery. These forums will also serve as regular opportunities for victims to connect with one another and with providers to exchange “best practices” regarding long term recovery and healing. Resiliency Forums will only be open to victims and survivors and will be available via live secured streaming feed on the web. To receive further information about the upcoming Resiliency Forums, please **contact Susan Vickers at 617-586-1352/617-549-9542 or via email at Susan.Vickers@state.ma.us.**